The Cleveland Museum of Art

The Cleveland Museum of Art Appoints Deputy Directors

News Release
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Cleveland, OH (May 17, 2018) — The Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA) has announced the promotion of three members of its executive leadership team to the position of deputy director: John Easley [1], deputy director and chief philanthropy officer; Heather Lemonedes [2], deputy director and chief curator; and Cyra Levenson [3], deputy director and head of public and academic engagement.

“I am extremely fortunate to work with a highly accomplished seven-member team of senior executives, but it has been several years since I have had a deputy,” said William Griswold, director of the CMA. “John, Heather and Cyra are outstanding and talented museum professionals, and I’m pleased to recognize the roles they play, together with the scope of their responsibilities, with their appointment to the position of deputy director. As members of our executive management team, they’ve been major contributors to the development and implementation of our strategic plan, *Making Art Matter: A Strategic Framework for Our Second Century*. Their appointments will help position us to accomplish some of the most ambitious goals of the plan, which support the creation of transformative experiences through art, both within as well as outside the walls of the museum.”

John Easley is the guiding architect of the museum's fundraising and external relations programs. He provides strategic leadership for marketing and communications, as well as for fund-development programs to support and strengthen the museum's cultural and educational mission. He works with colleagues, board members and volunteers to develop fundraising goals and strategies that broaden community connections and encourage philanthropic investment in the museum. Easley's recent accomplishments include the restructuring of the museum's Philanthropy and External Relations Division to align staffing and resources with the strategic plan's objectives, thus enhancing the division's team-based culture while achieving best practices in all areas of development and communications.

Heather Lemonedes supervises 18 curators, working closely with them and the director to strengthen the museum's celebrated permanent collection and to enhance its presentation. In addition, she oversees the Conservation Department, Department of Collections Management, and Ingalls Library and Archives. She partners with Cyra Levenson to interpret the museum's collection and to administer the institution's long-standing joint program in art history with Case Western Reserve University. Since becoming chief curator in May 2016, Lemonedes has hired five new curatorial staff members and played a key role in augmenting the collection with nearly 700 new works through both purchase and gift. Most recently, she curated the exhibition *Recent Acquisitions 2014–2017*, on view through June 7 in the Julia and Larry Pollock Focus Gallery.

Cyra Levenson oversees the interpretation of the museum's collection, helping to foster the public's active, meaningful engagement with art. Her new title, head of public and academic engagement, reflects the CMA's focus on making connections with all audiences. This effort includes managing public programs, art studio classes and K–12 education, as well as collaborating with colleges and universities. Levenson's recent accomplishments include supervising the creation of the museum's Diversity Leadership [4] Initiative, a citywide effort to address the long-standing lack of diversity in the museum profession. She has also played a key role in launching a community engagement initiative to activate the museum's extended outdoor campus and Fine Arts Garden. The reorganized Division of Public and Academic Engagement includes four new director-level appointments: director of public programs, director of interpretation, director of learning and engagement, and assistant director of academic engagement.

All three deputy director appointments went into effect on March 19, 2018.

Members of the museum's executive leadership team also include Jane Alexander, chief information officer; Ed Bauer, chief financial officer; Heidi Strean, director of exhibitions and publications; and Jeffrey Strean, director of design and architecture.

John Easley

John Easley joined the CMA in February 2017. Immediately prior to his arrival, Easley served as vice president and chief philanthropy officer of the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra. He also acted as its co-president and chief executive officer during an executive transition period.

With more than 40 years of experience in the cultural arts sector, Easley has managed a variety of marketing, communications and fundraising programs in leadership positions: vice president of development and external affairs, Saint Louis Art Museum; director of external affairs, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City; and director of development and external affairs, Minneapolis Institute of Art. Having held senior management roles at the Dallas Museum of Art and the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Easley also served as president of the Museum of New Mexico Foundation in Santa Fe and as national president of the Art Museum Development Association.

Easley holds a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Kansas.

Heather Lemonedes

Heather Lemonedes was appointed chief curator at the CMA in May 2016. She joined the curatorial staff in 2002, and was named curator of drawings in 2010. She also serves as an adjunct professor in the Department of Art History at Case Western Reserve University.

Lemonedes has curated or co-curated numerous exhibitions accompanied by scholarly catalogues at the CMA, including *British Drawings from the Cleveland Museum of Art* (2013); *Paul Gauguin: Paris, 1889* (2009), co-organized with the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam; and *Monet in Normandy* (2007), co-organized with the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco and the North Carolina Museum of Art. In addition, Lemonedes has curated various exhibitions for the prints and drawings galleries, including *Pure Color: Pastels from the Cleveland Museum of Art* (2016–17), *Imagining the Garden* (2015–16), *Themes and Variations: Musical Drawings and Prints* (2015), and *Mary Cassatt and the Feminine Ideal in 19th-Century Paris* (2012).

Lemonedes received a bachelor's degree in art history from Vassar College, a master's degree from the Courtauld Institute of Art in London, and a PhD from the Graduate Center, City University of New York.

Previously, she was employed in the Prints and Drawings Department at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and in the Print Department at Christie's, New York. A former board member of the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, she also served two terms as president of the Vassar Club of Cleveland.

Cyra Levenson

Cyra Levenson was appointed director of education and academic affairs at the CMA in May 2016. Prior to her arrival, she served as curator of education and academic outreach at the Yale Center for British Art in New Haven, Connecticut. There she developed innovative interpretive materials and programs based on the collections and special exhibitions, including campus-wide collaborations, and managed school partnership initiatives, family programs, teacher training and community collaborations. In addition to holding various education positions at the Seattle Art Museum, Levenson previously worked as museum education and gallery resources manager at the Rubin Museum of Art in New York City and as museum education coordinator at the Heritage School for the New York City Board of Education, where she supervised a museum education program at an arts-based public high school in East Harlem.

Levenson has taught extensively and has published numerous essays on museums and education, including “Creative Argument: The Power of Image and Word,” in *Learning Disabilities: A Contemporary Journal*; “Teaching towards Creativity,” in *Creativity in Art Education*; and “The Underserved Questions in Museum Education,” in *Studies in Art Education*. Also, Levenson co-curated the Yale Center for British Art exhibition *Figures of Empire: Slavery and Portraiture in 18th-Century Atlantic Britain* and produced the 2014 documentary *Visual Literacy: Rethinking the Role of Art in Education* [5].

Levenson holds a bachelor’s degree with high honors in visual arts, with a concentration in Asian art history, from Oberlin College, and an EdM in art and art education from Teachers College, Columbia University.

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About the Cleveland Museum of Art

The Cleveland Museum of Art is renowned for the quality and breadth of its collection, which includes more than 63,000 artworks and spans 6,000 years of achievement in the arts. The museum is a significant international forum for exhibitions, scholarship and performing arts and is a leader in digital innovations. One of the top comprehensive art museums in the nation, recognized for its award-winning Open Access program and free of charge to all, the Cleveland Museum of Art is located in the University Circle neighborhood.

The museum is supported in part by residents of Cuyahoga County through a public grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture and made possible in part by the Ohio Arts Council (OAC), which receives support from the State of Ohio and the National Endowment for the Arts. The OAC is a state agency that funds and supports quality arts experiences to strengthen Ohio communities culturally, educationally and economically. For more information about the museum and its holdings, programs and events, call 888-CMA-0033 or visit cma.org [6].

Press Announcements [7]

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Links

[1] http://www.clevelandart.org/about/press/media-kit/john-easley-appointed-chief-advancement-officer-cleveland-museum-art

[2] http://www.clevelandart.org/about/press/media-kit/heather-lemonedes-appointed-chief-curator

[3] http://www.clevelandart.org/about/press/media-kit/cyra-levenson-appointed-director-education-and-academic-affairs

[4] http://www.clevelandart.org/about/press/media-kit/cleveland-museum-art-announces-major-initiative-address-lack-diversity-art-museums

[5] https://vimeo.com/92872179

[6] https://www.clevelandart.org

[7] https://www.clevelandart.org/about/press/media-kit